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LETTER DATED 14 FEBRUARY 2000 FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

By its resolution 1265 (1999) of 17 September 1999 the Security Council undertook to review the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/1999/957) and to consider appropriate steps by April 2000 in accordance with the Council's responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations. To that end an informal working group of the Security Council was established in November.

On 11 November 1999, the President of the Security Council wrote a letter to the Secretary-General indicating that some of the recommendations contained in the aforementioned report related to the responsibilities of the General Assembly and suggesting that the Secretary-General consequently make the report available to the General Assembly. This has been done, and the report now exists as a document of the General Assembly (A/54/619). During the review process currently under way, the members of the informal working group have suggested that four recommendations should be referred to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly for consideration. I would be grateful if the Special Committee would undertake to consider those four recommendations and, by the end of its annual formal session (11 February-10 March 2000), offer guidance on how those recommendations might be acted upon.

The four recommendations are as follows:

(a) Take steps that strengthen the Organization's capacity to plan and deploy rapidly. This includes enhancing the participation in the United Nations Stand-by Arrangements System, including by increasing the numbers of civilian police and specialized civil administration and humanitarian personnel. Rapidly deployable units of military and police are also required. Also essential is the capacity to quickly deploy a Mission headquarters;

(b) Support a public "ombudsman" with all peacekeeping operations to deal with complaints from the general public about the behaviour of United Nations peacekeepers and establish an ad hoc fact-finding commission, as necessary, to examine reports on alleged breaches of international humanitarian and human rights law committed by members of United Nations forces;

(c) Request the deploying Member States to report to the United Nations measures taken to prosecute members of their armed forces who have violated international humanitarian and human rights law while in service of the United Nations;

(d) Mobilize international support for national security forces, from logistical and operational assistance to technical advice, training and supervision where necessary.

Any views the Special Committee might wish to offer with regard to other recommendations relating to peacekeeping would, of course, also be welcome.

(Signed) Arnoldo Manuel LISTRE
President of the Security Coun